

**Amendments to the Claims:**

Claims 4-8, 10 and 15-26 are cancelled.

Claims 11-14, 28 and 31-32 have been amended as shown below. Underlines indicate insertions; ~~strikeouts~~ or double brackets [ ] indicate deletions.

1. (Previously presented). A trim press article handling apparatus, comprising:
  - a frame;
  - a punch carried by the frame;
  - a die carried by the frame and cooperating in relative movement with the punch to sever articles from a web;
    - a treadle carried for movement relative to the die, the treadle including a web guide member, a primary guide strip spaced from the guide member slightly greater than a thickness of the web, a secondary guide strip spaced from the guide member at least four thicknesses of the web and spaced apart from the primary guide strip, and an article detector carried by at least one of the primary guide strip and the secondary guide strip and operative to detect position of an article in the web by detecting the position of a protuberance in the web as the protuberance is conveyed between the primary guide strip and the secondary guide strip;
    - control circuitry communicating with the article detector and a drive motor operative to move the treadle, the control circuitry configured to receive an input signal from the article detector indicative of the position of a web-supported article relative to the

punch and the die, and operative to control operation of the drive motor to synchronize movement of the web-supported article via controlled motion of the treadle; and

a drive wheel assembly for moving a web and articles, the drive wheel assembly comprising a pair of roller feed assemblies provided on opposed edges of a web, wherein each of the roller feed assemblies comprises a drive release mechanism configured to release the roller feed assemblies from respective edges of the web, the release mechanism carried by the treadle and operative to cooperate with the die as the treadle is moved towards a stationary platen carrying the die.

2. (Original). The article handling apparatus of claim 1, wherein the knock lever mechanism comprises a kinematic linkage having a center pivot with the lever arm provided at one end of the kinematic linkage and the follower wheel provided at an opposite end of the kinematic linkage.

3. (Original). The article handling apparatus of claim 2, wherein movement of the treadle toward the platen and die imparts contact of the lever arm with the platen that imparts retraction of the follower wheel away from the drive wheel that opens up a gap therebetween and releases a respective edge of a web carried therebetween to enable lateral adjustment of the web and articles when centering the articles during a severing operation.

4-10. (Cancelled).

11. (Currently amended). The apparatus of claim 14[[10]], wherein the article detector is carried by at least one of the primary guide strip and the secondary guide strip and operative to detect a position of an article in the web by detecting a position of a protuberance in the web as the protuberance is conveyed between the primary guide strip and the secondary guide strip.

12. (Currently amended). The apparatus of claim 14[[10]], wherein the gap between the primary guide strip and the guide member is greater than a thickness of the web of material.

13. (Currently amended). The apparatus of claim 14[[10]], wherein the second guide strip is spaced at least four thicknesses of the web and spaced apart from the primary guide strip.

14. (Currently amended). The apparatus of claim 10, A trim press article handling apparatus, comprising:

a punch and a die carried by a frame, the die cooperating with the punch to sever articles from a web of thermoformable material;

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a treadle carried for movement relative to the die, the treadle including a web guide member, a primary guide strip disposed adjacent the web guide member, a secondary guide strip spaced from the guide member, and an article detector to detect a position of an article in the web;

control circuitry communicating with the article detector, and a drive motor operative to move the treadle; and

a drive wheel assembly for moving the web and the articles, the drive wheel assembly comprising a pair of roller feed assemblies provided on opposed edges of the web, wherein each of the roller feed assemblies comprises a drive release mechanism carried by the treadle, configured to cooperate with the die as the treadle is moved towards a stationary platen carrying the die, and configured to release the roller feed assemblies from a respective edge of the web in response to cooperation of the drive release mechanism with the die;

wherein the control circuitry is configured to receive an input signal from the article detector, the input signal being indicative of the position of an article relative to the punch and the die, the control circuitry being operative to control operation of the drive motor to synchronize movement of the article via controlled motion of the treadle.

15-27. (Cancelled).

28. (Currently amended). A trim press article handling apparatus, comprising:

a punch and a die carried by a frame, the die cooperating with the punch to sever articles from a web of thermoformable material;

a treadle configured to move relative to the die, the treadle including a web guide member, a primary guide strip disposed adjacent the web guide member, a secondary guide strip spaced from the guide member, and an article detector to detect a position of an article in the web;

control circuitry communicating with the article detector; and

a drive wheel assembly for moving a web and articles, the drive wheel assembly comprising a pair of roller feed assemblies provided on opposed edges of the web, wherein each of the roller feed assemblies comprises a drive release mechanism carried by the treadle, configured to cooperate with the die as the treadle is moved towards a stationary platen carrying the die, and configured to release the roller feed assemblies from a respective edge of the web in response to cooperation of the drive release mechanism with the die, each of the roller feed assemblies includes a knock lever mechanism having a lever arm and a follower wheel, wherein a gap is formed between the follower wheel and the respective drive wheel in response to contact of the lever arm with the die to release the web carried therebetween and to enable lateral centering of the articles carried in the web.

29. (Original). The trim press article handling apparatus of claim 28, further comprising a drive motor operative to move the treadle.

30. (Original). The trim press article handling apparatus of claim 28, wherein the roller feed assemblies are provided on opposed edges of the web.

31. (Currently amended). The trim press article handling apparatus of claim 28, further comprising awherein the knock lever mechanism is carried by the treadle.

32. (Currently amended). The trim press article handling apparatus of claim 28, wherein a[[the]] lever arm of the knock lever mechanism is configured to contact the die as the treadle is moved towards a stationary platen carrying the die, and a[[the]] follower wheel of the knock lever mechanism is configured to retract from a[[the]] respective drive wheel in response to contact of the lever arm with the die to enable the lateral centering of the web.

33. (Previously presented). The article handling apparatus of claim 1, wherein the drive release mechanism comprises a knock lever mechanism having a lever arm and a follower wheel, the lever arm configured to contact the die as the treadle is moved towards a stationary platen carrying the follower wheel, and the follower wheel is

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configured to retract from the respective drive wheel in response to contact of the lever arm with the die.